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School Closure Weekly Update

Friday 15th January 2021

Dear Parents,

Thank you to everyone for your continued support during this period of partial school opening. I hope that you are all doing ok and getting through the weeks as best you can.

With the children spending perhaps more time than usual online, I wanted to remind you of the support and advice available on our school website regarding online safety. This includes a reminder of our online safety rules, a copy of our online safety policy and useful websites with resources for parents and children.

These can be accessed by following the link below:

<https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding/online-safety/>

Parents should ensure that their children are suitably supervised when online and that any devices have appropriate filters in place. Resources on the website offer further advice about this. We will be supporting National Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 9th February – look out for further information on our website in the next few weeks. This will include activities that the children can join in with.

To ensure that any video materials being used to support learning are as secure as possible, we are now using 'VideoLink' as the means by which these can be accessed. This will cut out advertising and periphery material on YouTube for example. Support videos will either be listed in the daily task box or placed towards the bottom of the remote learning year group page (if this is a more permanent resource). You continue to simply click on the link and you will be taken to the video which will be hosted through VideoLink.

Please contact us if there is anything that we can help with. Our families will all be encountering very different experiences during this time and we are here to support in any way we can.

Message for the Children...

Hi everyone,

I hope that you've all had a good week and are continuing to work hard. I am so proud of all of you – whether you are at home or at school – you are all brilliant!

At the end of the month is the RSPB's big Bird Watch. This might be something fun to join in with. The RSPB are asking people to take a survey of the birds that they can see in the gardens or from their windows. You can find out further details by following the link below:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

Why not send for the free pack which will help you to join in? I've got mine already and as I live by the sea, I think I might be recording a lot of seagulls on my chart!

Have a good week everyone.

Smiles to you all

Miss Talbot



Remote Learning – Interactive Zoom Sessions

We hope the children have enjoyed engaging with the interactive Zoom sessions that we've been offering so far. As we get into our stride with these, we will continue to build on our initial starting offer. This method of teaching is very far removed from that which both children and staff are used to. It may take a while for some of the children to feel comfortable about joining in or appearing on screen. That's fine – we understand that this is new territory for us all. I would however, encourage all the children to join in with the sessions offered to them where possible and hope that they will soon get used to this new way of working. With some of our Year R team still recovering from the after effects of Covid, interactive sessions will be offered once everyone is feeling better.

It will help the children to make the most of the sessions, if they adopt the same mind-set that they would in class. Please can they go to the toilet before the session starts and save getting up for snacks and drinks until after it has finished. We know that there will be lots of distractions at home but full attention is required for each lesson.

Details of the Interactive Zoom sessions offered to each year group next week will be sent out via ParentMail by Mrs Stein later today. You will be able to see the timetable for the week, enabling you to plan accordingly.

Feedback for the Children

Please continue to send your children's work in for feedback. I am so proud of the positive start made by so many of our children. They have been brilliant. We have seen so many examples of children working their socks off and taking the same care and attention to their work as they would in class.

We understand that some families may be finding it hard to support their child's learning at home due to work or family commitments. This is a really difficult situation and we don't want things to become stressful at home. If your child is finding it difficult to complete all the tasks set, prioritise English and maths and try to do at least one thing each day. Keep to a routine if you can and include regular breaks for a chance to recharge! Our Reception children will need to build in plenty of time to learn through play as this is part of their usual timetable at school and an important aspect of their development. If we haven't yet seen any work from your child, the staff will be getting in touch to see if there is anything else that we can do to support your child's engagement. Thank you for all you are doing at home – this will make a huge difference.

Gold Cards and Remote Achiever Assemblies

This week I have sent out nearly a dozen gold card stickers to some of our children for their amazing home learning efforts. Look out for the gold envelopes that will be dropping through some letterboxes.

On Monday I will also be hosting my first virtual Achiever's Assembly. The class teachers have selected a child from each class, who is working at home, to join me for a special online assembly. The 14 children chosen will be able to share with me the work they have been doing at home and I will present certificates. I will be contacting the parents of the children in our first group later today. Our Achiever Assemblies for those in school will continue as usual.

Lunches for Children Entitled to Benefit Related Free School Meals

Over the past week, the media have highlighted some very poor practice from some National caterers which has prompted a revised position from the Government with regards to the provision of lunches during the school closure period for families entitled to benefit related free school meals. Where initially the standpoint was, that where kitchens could offer food parcels for families they should, the Government have now reopened the National voucher scheme which will allow vouchers to be offered to families as an alternative to a food parcel. Having discussed this situation with our school kitchen, we are now in a position to be able to switch to the National voucher method for the duration of the school closure period. I know that many families have enjoyed receiving food parcels due the variety of produce offered and the convenience of not having to visit supermarkets so if you wish to opt out of the voucher system and would prefer to continue to receive food parcels, please contact the school office on Monday. If we don't hear from you, we will presume that you would prefer a voucher instead.

As the latest food parcels cover a 2 week period, we will move to a voucher system for our families from Monday 25th January. E codes will be sent to parents which can then be converted to supermarket vouchers and spent in store. We will send out further details about this system next week.

Support with Technology for Remote Learning

We have contacted those families who will be receiving the first tranche of Government laptops received by the school. We have hopefully ensured that none of our children are now only working with a mobile phone at home. I will start to build a waiting list for any further devices that become available and would now invite any other families who would be

interested in receiving the loan of a laptop to complete the form circulated via ParentMail last week to register their interest.

The link to the form can also be reached by clicking below:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ynpWSsYy6kWKTLrBMaHw_-yhziNeRdVLT6o2clwToipUN000RERITTEwRUVRWk9FSDBENTZEMFJPTS4u

We will next look at supporting those families who are sharing only a tablet between two or more children or where devices in the home are unreliable. As further devices become available we will get in touch with those of you on the waiting list.

The BBC have launched a campaign to encourage anyone with an old, unwanted laptop at home, to donate these to schools. If anyone has a laptop which they no longer need, we would welcome any donations. We have the facility to wipe devices and set them up prior to them being loaned out to families. Please email me if you can help with this.

Keeping Active

It is important for everyone at home to remain active over the lockdown period. I know that the poor weather recently may mean that it's been harder to get outside so perhaps look at what you can do indoors. Next week we will be sending out details of physical activities that your child can join in with through the imoves website. Don't forget that Joe Wicks is also offering online sessions to get everyone moving!

Those children in school will continue to have PE on their allocated days. Please ensure that they wear PE kits and suitable layers to keep them warm for outdoor games, weather permitting.

Latest Government Guidance

The latest Government guidance on Coronavirus can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Please remember to notify the school in the event that your child demonstrates symptoms of coronavirus or if they are self-isolating as someone in their household has symptoms and is undergoing testing.

Take care and stay safe.

Kind Regards

Jill Talbot

Headteacher